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THE LYCÉES OF FRANCE

I

THE lycées of France, including both the petits lycées and lycées proper, fill the places in the French educational system taken in our own by grammar schools, high and preparatory schools, and the two lower classes of the colleges. The petits lycées are sometimes housed in the buildings of the higher lycées, as in the Lycée Henri IV., sometimes in separated institutions, as where the Lycée Montaigne is petit lycée to the Lycée Louis le Grand. Their work is elementary, and falls only partially within the scope of this article.

The higher lycées, like our own secondary schools, aim at an education at once finishing and preparatory. At the end of his course the student in the lycée is ready to take the examinations for the baccalaureates in Lettres-Philosophie, Lettres-Mathématiques or Lettres-Sciences, or the examinations for admission to the higher schools—the École normale, École polytechnique, École centrale, École de Saint-Cyr or the École forestière. The lycées also prepare for the entrance examinations to the several departments of the public service, of which there are about forty divisions distributed among the various ministries; and thus there is brought to bear upon them an influence not felt by our secondary schools. How this influence may cause the student to overwork and to work for pass-marks rather than for power, how it baffles the efforts of councils set to reforming the curriculum, will be brought out at the proper time. Here in the beginning, however, something more intimate than the perfunctory introduction of classifying generalities must be given, lest what is to follow concerning courses of study and methods of teaching will be lacking in significance.

A personal acquaintance with the lycées of Paris can be secured only after one has received official permission to visit and "assist" at their classes from the Recteur de l'Académie de Paris, and thus one is made aware in the beginning of the highly centralized organization of the public schools of France,

which goes so far that the lycées of Paris are not only under the direct control of the university, but that they and all the lycées in France and Algiers must follow courses of study decreed by the minister and council of education. But this fact implies neither politics in the schools nor a mechanical curriculum, as it might in this country; for, as between lycée and university, there is not only the enforcement of university ideas and the inspiration of university ideals, but a direct personal connection in that the university professor is often a professor in the lycée. Thus, among the French teachers that it has been my good fortune to meet, M. Victor Morel is professor of English in both the Sorbonne and the Lycée Louis le Grand, and as for the department of education, it contains such men as M. E. Lebon, fellow in the university, and professor of mathematics in the Lycée Charlemagne. This constant personal intercourse between the lower and the higher schools, and between the schools and their governing board, ought to produce better results than our occasional schoolmen's conferences and the monthly meetings of boards of laymen whom the principal, superintendent, or president is too often obliged to approach as if he were the special pleading attorney of a pedagogical junta. And I believe that a study of the French schools will show that secondary school and university are working sympathetically and intelligently together, and that the curriculum and manual of discipline for the lycées are the work of experts laboring without interference from the outside.

Besides these more academical influences, there are others which one expects beforehand to find modifying the schools among the other institutions of the French, as the ideas of 1789, the Frenchman's love of clearness, harmony, and proportion in things, sundry inheritances from the schools of the Jesuits, together with the modifications of reformers—in the discipline of the schools many reflections of the French social system. But as a preliminary to all deduction, we must have first the curriculum itself; and its two divisions, the courses of study known as the modern and the classical, are exhibited below in tables that show the several studies, the number of recitation hours a week in each, the total hours of recitation, weekly, for each student, and the percentage of the total time devoted to each study:

MODERN

Studies	Division de grammaire				Division supérieure			Per cent. of total time	
	6th class	5th class	4th class	3d class	2d class	1st class (letters)	1st class (sciences)	Letters	Sciences
French	6	6	5	4	5	3	1 §	21	19
German	6	8	4*	3	3	1 §	1	25	24
English, Italian, etc.	1½	2	4	3	3	1 §	1	10½	9
History			2	2	2	3	3		
History of Civilization and Art						2	2		
Geography	1½	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	5
Arithmetic	2	2	3	4	4†			11	16
Geometry									
Algebra									
Trigonometry									
Descriptive Geometry									
Zoology	1					2	2	3	3
Natural History				†					
Geology									
Botany									
Physics									
Chemistry					4			5	8
Philosophy									
Elem. Law and Political Economy						8	2	8	3
Ethics			1			1½	1½		
Hygiene						†	†		
Bookkeeping						1 §	1		
Writing	1								
Drawing	3	3	3	3	3	1½ §	3	11½	13
Total	22	23	23	23	25	25	25½		

* The student must take two languages besides French. One, either English or German, is obligatory -- the other, elective, is German, English, Italian, Spanish, Russian, or Arabic.
† Twelve conferences of one hour.
‡ Including ten lessons in cosmography.
§ Elective, one hour a week -- literature included, in the study of the languages.
|| Including cosmography and mechanics.

CLASSICAL COURSE

Studies	Division de grammaire				Division supérieure			Per cent. of total time
	6th class	5th class	4th class	3d class	2d class	1st class (rhetoric)	1st class (philosophy)	
French - - - - -	3	3	2	2	3	4		11½
Modern Languages--English, German, etc.	3	3	2	2	2	3	I	10½
Latin - - - - -	10	9	5	5	{	4		25
Greek - - - - -	-	1	6	5	{	4		14
History - - - - -	*	{	2	2	2	2	3	9
Geography - - - - -	{	2	1	1	1	1½		4
Arithmetic - - - - -	I	I	2	{	{	{	{	3
Geometry - - - - -	-	-	-	3	3	2 §		4
Algebra - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3
Zoology - - - - -	I	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Natural History - - - - -	-	-	-	-	†	-	-	-
Geology - - - - -	-	† {	-	-	-	-	-	-
Botany - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physics - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	{	4
Chemistry - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	-
Philosophy - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	8½	6
Hygiene - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	†	-
Writing - - - - -	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Drawing - - - - -	1½	1½	1½	1½	2	2	2	4
Total hours per week - - - - -	21½	21½	21½	21½	22	22½	23½

* One class.

† Twelve conferences of one hour each in this year.

|| Elective.

† Geology, one hour a week, first semester; botany the second.

§ An additional conference of one hour a week is elective, and ten lessons in cosmography are included in the year's work in mathematics.

One need not study these tables long to see that they exhibit as in actual practice, rational ideas that have long been urged by our best teachers as necessary reforms in American schools, until at last they are being reduced to working principles among us. It will be observed, first, that the boy's school life is treated as a consistent whole, that there is nowhere such a disastrous break as occurs between our grammar school and secondary school, and in lesser degree between secondary school and college. From the sixth class to the classes in letters, philosophy, and science, from the eighth to the eighteenth year, there is, in the lycée, orderly development—indeed it begins in the very first or “preparatory” class of the elementary division. In this class, for example, the student commences with oral exercises in English and German, and with simple biographical stories from history, and these subjects, modern language and history, are not interrupted for a single week until they are concluded, six or seven years later in studies in the English and German literatures, and the political and economic history of France. Moreover this continuous development of subject-matter is not mere official organization, it is guaranteed and made vital by the personal relations, spoken of above, existing between *petit* and higher lycée, and between lycée and university.

This treatment of each subject as a larger method whole has the added advantage of affording opportunity for really scientific ordering and correlation of studies. As a foundation to all education; a familiar acquaintance with one's mother tongue and literature, and with one or two modern languages, is considered essential, and accordingly we find that students in the classical course spend 22, and students in the modern course 45 per cent. of their time in acquiring French, and English or German, or both, together with, sometimes, Russian or Italian or Spanish. Therefore it is not surprising that the style of the French newspaper article does not usually offend, that French boys who speak either English or German are not rarities, and that the young Frenchman who wishes to travel has some equipment for his pleasure and his work.

In the French schools language means literature as well as

several other things. It means literature when it is made helper to history, geography, and the classics—as it is in the lycées in a manner that will be discussed later. For the present it is enough to show that language, drawing, and mathematics, music, and gymnastic, or, to put it abstractly, thought, form, emotion, and will, are made the piers of the bridge from knowledge to power.

The student in the classical course must spend 4 per cent. of his time in drawing, and may thus spend 8 per cent. of it if he so elects. Students of the modern course spend about 12 per cent. of their time in drawing. Music is obligatory through the fourth class. It consumes one or two hours a week, and is supposed to fit the student to read music readily, and to sing a part in a song of moderate difficulty. The study of the elements of harmony is elective for students of the upper classes. Three hours in the week are reserved for gymnastics and simple military exercises. Whether the student gets enough of music or not I cannot say. I know that he does not receive adequate physical training, and I do not know that he is given any manual training. Failure to develop physical bottom is the weak point in the educational bridge.

In mathematics the student is found finishing arithmetic in the sixth and fifth grammar classes. In the fourth class he begins geometry—as he should—before he begins algebra. He makes acquaintance with algebra in the third class, together with, in the modern course, physics and chemistry, and both mathematics and physics and chemistry are finished by the division in letters in the second class, that its students may devote their last year to literature, history, and philosophy; while the division in science is continued in mathematics and physics and chemistry throughout this last year. Thus it will be seen that the more difficult studies of physics and chemistry are not begun before the student has some maturity and some foundation for them in geometry and algebra. In the upper classes of the modern course the physics and the chemistry are carried along with trigonometry and descriptive geometry. The “natural history” required in the last year of both courses

includes animal and vegetable physiology, hygiene, and a brief exposition of the elements of palæontology. The course in philosophy embraces psychology, logic, morals, and the elements of metaphysics. It is supplemented, in the modern course, by lectures on the principles of law and political economy.

Up to this point nothing has been said about Greek and Latin, because I wish to conclude this brief survey of the studies and their ordering by an analysis of the courses in the classical languages, history, and geography, to show in more specific detail how the subjects are developed and correlated. I need scarcely say that before the student has been introduced, in his eleventh year, to Latin and ancient history, he has already acquired some ancient and a great deal of French history out of the biographies of illustrious men and by learning to tell the stories of celebrated historical scenes; while in geography he knows his own town and department, and has general notions of France and the five continents. Moreover, he has learned some grammar, not as a study by itself, but naturally while learning to read and write his own language, and while struggling with the difficulties of a foreign language, either English or German. Now that he begins Latin he has the grammars of three languages, two of them closely akin, for purposes of comparison, and in the year following, when he begins Greek, he has four; his knowledge of history is being constantly enriched by readings in three literatures, while at the same time it is not forgotten that he is a French boy in whom his native literature must be developing a sense of nationality. If, in the period of secondary training now properly beginning, he seems to be making extraordinary progress, it must be borne in mind that there are other factors than a scientifically arranged program of studies at work—in language the constant social and commercial intercourse among neighboring countries and the descent of French from the Latin; in history the occupation of ground at once the theater and the museum of the centuries; and in all the studies temporary advantage of an early maturity.

To return to the program, Latin begins in the sixth class with the parts of speech, phrase translations from and into the

vernacular, and with readings in the texts *Epitome Historiae Graecae* and *De Viris Illustribus Urbis Romae*. In geography the classic region of the Mediterranean circle of lands is especially studied, also the geometry of the globe, the structure and form of the continents, the principal states, their productions, capitals, etc. In history the geography of the oriental empires, their history, and the oriental beginnings of Greek history are developed.

The program for the Latin of the fifth class is as follows: Review work; elementary syntax; sight translations of French to Latin and a comparison of construction in the two languages; sight and prepared translations of the texts *De Viris*, *Selectae e Profanis Scriptoribus Historiae*, from Nepos and the fables of Phaedrus, etc., and scansion. Especial stress is laid upon the exercises in the texts. Greek is begun in this class. Two hours a day are devoted to elementary work, as in the program for the beginners' Latin class; and the history and geography of Greece are finished. In this year geography is made the vehicle of nationality, the frontiers, the loss of territory in 1871, and the colonial possessions of France being especially emphasized; and this work, and also the work in history, is supplemented by readings from Corneille, Molière, Racine, La Fontaine, and Fénelon.

The Latin program of the fourth class is in general like that of the fifth, and, as in the latter, written and oral themes and the biographies of the authors read, are included in the work. It is in the fourth class that the student is encouraged to do private outside reading in the authors of the previous year's study. The texts read by the fourth class are Nepos, Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*, Cicero's *De Senectute*, the *Aeneid* of Virgil, and the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. It will at once be seen how admirably these authors link the Latin to the Roman history of the year; and the Greek authors read, Aesop, Xenophon, Lucian, and Aelian shed light upon the history of the previous year. This reinforcement of studies is better than anything that I know of in our own public schools. I have before me the programs of two high schools of the better class in the middle West, and in one of them but one year of general history is given in the classical course, and that is associated with the third year of Latin and

the second year of Greek—while in the other all the history of the classical course comes in the first three semesters.

Only one of the two courses referred to above contains geography, offering two and one half hours a week of it during the first year. This subject—one that can be made so much *en rapport* with life from the boy's point of view—has been as admirably developed in the French schools as it has been deplorably neglected in our own. I wish that I had space to give a complete outline of the geography taught in the lycées, so much does it impress me as a fine adaptation of instruction to the needs and prepossessions of boyhood. Yet it will be well to consider briefly the opportunities that the professor of geography is given in a well-arranged curriculum, as illustrated, for example, in the bold outline of the geography of the third class in the classical course of the lycée. The student is now fourteen years of age. In French he is reading Michelet's *History of the Middle Ages*; in Latin, *Livy*, *Sallust* and *Virgil*; in Greek, *Herodotus* and the *Odyssey*; in German, *Maria Stuart*, or in English, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare*. In history he is studying the Roman Empire in the East, the Norman invasions, the Mohammedan Empire, and the Crusades. He has "traveled in the realms of gold, and many goodly states and kingdoms seen," until his interest and imagination have been stirred by vivid pictures from literature and history—pictures of a period when geography was a romance of exploration and adventure. With boys fast in such seizure, it will not be very difficult for the teacher to make the "Africa, Asia, Oceanica" of the course in geography, "their configuration and superficies, seas and coasts, archipelagoes and islands" realms of gold. He may even "hold in fealty to Apollo" their "grand features of relief—rivers and lakes—climates—regions uncultivated—fauna—the principal possessions of European states—chief productions—population—indigenous races and immigrations—language and religion." And with "great historic remains—great voyages of discovery—commerce—the principal ports—chief routes of commerce by sea and land—great lines of telegraph," he may startle the boy to the "wild surmise" that the study of geography may, after all,

throw valuable side lights upon the travels of Polo or the whereabouts of Treasure Island. At any rate, such possibilities of inspired teaching as the outline just quoted indicates must appeal to all of us—and to the mature, widely-read, trained, and enthusiastic professor of history and geography, there is suggested an opportunity almost equal to that given to the Russian professor of literature so sympathetically described in Prince Krapotkins' autobiography, of whom the prince says :

In Russia there is not a man or woman of mark, in literature or in political life who does not owe the first impulse toward a higher development to his or her teacher of literature. Every school in the world ought to have such a teacher. Each teacher in a school has his own subject, and there is no link between the different subjects. Only the teacher of literature, guided by the general outlines of the program, but left free to treat it as he likes, can bind together the separate historical and humanitarian sciences that are taught in a school, unify them by a broad philosophical and humane conception, and awaken higher ideas and inspirations in the brains and hearts of the young people. . . . The same thing ought to be done for the natural sciences as well. . . . Perhaps the teacher of geography might provisionally assume this function ; but then we should require a different set of teachers of this subject, and a different set of professors of geography in the universities would be needed. What is now taught under this name is anything you like, but it is not geography.

This criticism by Prince Krapotkin of European schools in general still holds true of the French lycées in some particulars ; nevertheless the lycées attempt and in a measure realize his ideal, partly through the correlation of studies described above, and partly through such generalizing courses in geology, cosmography, literature, and the history of civilization and art as will be mentioned farther on. Surely the French boy who, by the time he has completed his third class, has not begun to acquire a self-directing interest in his work must be dull indeed, and quite unprepared to do the work of the second class, in which, according to our arbitrary marking off of educational periods, he finishes his secondary schooling. For although he is given but slight opportunity to elect his studies, he will nevertheless fail to follow out the historical method largely pursued in this class, unless he begins to think and compare for himself—and

he must do this, to a degree, in spite of the handicap he is subjected to in an overload of work.

To make this clear, let us take the study of Greek. Heretofore very little has been said about the Greek, because the amount of work, and the method prescribed in it are essentially the same for the Latin. The Greek of the second class includes the usual review of grammar, the theme and the formal translation, and a choice of readings in Xenophon, Plato, Plutarch, the *Iliad*, and Euripides, also certain *pages et pensées morales extraites des auteurs grecs*. But in addition to all this, the student must prepare ten lessons in the history of Greek literature, beginning with the early poetic traditions and ending with Christian oratory in the fourth century. It is this work, with similar courses in the history of French and of Latin literature, together with the work in history, geography, geology, and cosmography, that inaugurates that period of youth when the charms of general ideas and of generous philosophizing first begins to be felt. And the teaching of this period is certainly informed with the spirit invoked by Prince Krapotkin; for, to take only one instance, in the lectures given in geology at this time the bold enumeration of strata and fossils is rigorously proscribed — the subject is treated as earth history, that the student may carry forward to the advanced work of the classes in rhetoric and philosophy the idea of development by evolution. As the work of the classes last mentioned goes beyond what is attempted in our secondary schools, I will not outline it farther than has already been done in the preliminary survey of the curriculum. Nor shall I have space here to give details from the courses in science. It will be seen, however, by consulting the percentages given in the tables above, that science is by no means neglected even in the literary courses of the lycées. These tables also show how much recitation time is actually devoted to any one study.

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(To be concluded)